# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:84
ANSWERED ON:17.07.2017
Review Meeting of WTO
Mani Shri Jose K.

**Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has called for a review meeting to promote connectivity through digital trade in developing countries this year and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the experts in India have expressed apprehensions that this attempt by the WTO may be a backdoor attempt to push e-commerce and if so, the details thereof; and
(c) whether India is already facing resistance by its domestic small trader lobby over allowing foreign direct investment in e-commerce and is keen to conclude the pending food security related issues before allowing any fresh issues to be taken up by the WTO and if so, the details thereof including the reaction of the Government thereto?

## Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a)The sixth Aid for Trade Global Review will took place at the WTO on 11-13 July 2017. The Aid for Trade initiative was launched in 2005 with the aim of addressing the supply side and trade-related infrastructure constraints that often hamper developing countries' participation in global trade. The 2017 Global Review is dedicated to the theme of "Promoting Trade, Inclusiveness and Connectivity for Sustainable Development", and will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to look at how Aid for Trade can contribute to the integration of developing countries and least developed countries into the multilateral trading system and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Aid for Trade Global Review 2015 highlighted how high trade costs slow growth and development by pricing many suppliers in developing and least developed countries out of global markets. The 2017 Global Review develops this theme further by extending analysis of trade costs into the area of digital connectivity. The Review will discuss the economic consequences of the digital divide and strategies to help policymakers, firms, women and SMEs to bridge this divide.

(b)The definitions of digital trade and e-commerce require further deliberation at various bodies of the WTO to bring clarity on the scope of the subject. E-commerce presently is not on the agenda of the WTO.

(c) FDI policy in different sectors including on e-commerce sector is formulated after extensive consultations with stakeholders including concerned Ministries/Departments concerned and apex industry chambers .

India has been working with WTO members especially the developing countries to ensure that its interests in the WTO negotiations are protected. Implementation of Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Decisions, especially on public stockholding for food security purposes is a priority for India in the negotiations and India is working for a permanent solution in this area.

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